

## Message Text

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DRAFTED BY INR/DDR: MPACKMAN

APPROVED BY INR: WGHYLAND

S/S - MR. KUCHEL

NEA - MR. CONSTABLE

EUR/SOV - MR. BARRY

C - MR. SHINN

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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NODIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS -1, 2

TAGS: PINR, AF, PK, UR

SUBJECT: PAK-AFGHAN TENSIONS: SOVIET INTENTIONS AND

OBJECTIVES

REF: ISLAMABAD 7433, STATE 195235

1. FOLLOWING INR ANALYSIS ON ABOVE SUBJECT IS FORWARDED  
TO YOU FOR YOUR INFORMATION.

2. THE PAKISTANIS HAVE EVIDENCED ONCE AGAIN, IN CONVER-  
SATIONS WITH THE US AND IRAN IN THE PAST FEW DAYS, THEIR  
GREAT CONCERN ABOUT THE SOVIET THREAT AND THE POSSIBILITY  
OF AN INDO-AFGHAN ADVENTURE AGAINST PAKISTAN, EITHER  
DIRECTLY OR THROUGH SUBVERSION.

3. THE RECENT QUERY OF THE SOVIET DCM IN KABUL TO THE  
PAKISTANI CHARGE THERE AS TO WHETHER PAKISTAN WOULD AGREE

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TO CEDE SOME TERRITORY TO AFGHANISTAN HAS PROMPTED THE

PAKISTANIS TO SOUND OUT THE ATTITUDES OF THE US AND IRAN IF THE INDIANS AND AFGHANS, WITH SOVIET BACKING, ATTACKED PAKISTAN. THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR IN KABUL IS REPORTED BY THE PAKISTANIS TO HAVE CONDEMNED PAKISTAN'S ANTI-AFGHAN POSTURE, CHARACTERIZED THE DURAND LINE AS A COLONIAL LEGACY, AND ASSERTED THAT THE "ASIAN COLLECTIVE SECURITY PACT" WAS THE ONLY WAY IN WHICH REGIONAL DISPUTES COULD BE RESOLVED.

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4. THE "PUSHTUNISTAN" PROBLEM: THE CURRENT FUROR IS THE MOST RECENT MANIFESTATION OF THE PERSISTENT STRAINS IN PAK-AFGHAN RELATIONS THAT DERIVE FROM THE LONGSTANDING DISPUTE OVER "PUSHTUNISTAN." AFGHANISTAN DOES NOT RECOGNIZE THE 1893 DURAND LINE--THE PRESENT BORDER--WHICH DIVIDES THE PATHAN (CALLED PUSHTUN BY THE AFGHANS) TRIBAL AREAS. MOREOVER, IT CONTINUES TO DEMAND SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE PUSHTUNS IN PAKISTAN'S TWO FRONTIER PROVINCES AND TO GIVE THEM PROPAGANDA AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT.

5. PAKISTAN VIEWS THESE ACTIONS AS INTERFERENCE IN ITS INTERNAL AFFAIRS AND IS CONVINCED THAT THE AFGHAN GOAL IS THE INCORPORATION OF THE PATHAN TRIBAL AREAS. FURTHERMORE, IN THE PAKISTANI VIEW, AFGHANISTAN IS A BASE FOR SOVIET EXPANSIONISM AND PART OF THE "SOVIET-INDIAN-AFGHAN COLLUSION" AGAINST THE BHUTTO REGIME. BOTH PAKISTAN AND AFGHANISTAN, HOWEVER, APPEAR INTERESTED IN AVOIDING A MAJOR CONFRONTATION.

6. MARKED BY DEEP DISTRUST, VICIOUS PROPAGANDA, AND MUTUAL ALLEGATIONS OF SUBVERSION, RELATIONS REACHED A LOW IN 1961 DURING THE EARLIER TENURE AS PRIME MINISTER OF AFGHAN PRESIDENT DAOUD, A MILITANT PUSHTUNISTAN ADVOCATE. FRICTION BETWEEN THE TWO STATES LED THE AFGHANS TO CLOSE THE BORDER AND TO SEVER DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS FOR TWO YEARS. THE BREAK CONTRIBUTED TO DAOUD'S OUSTER AS PRIME MINISTER IN 1963, AND HE REMAINED OUT OF POWER UNTIL HE OVERTHREW THE MONARCHY IN 1973. HE IMMEDIATELY REVIVED HIS "FORWARD POLICY" ON THE PUSHTUNISTAN ISSUE, AND PAK-AFGHAN RELATIONS HAVE BEEN POOR SINCE THEN.

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7. IN JUNE, PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO AND DAOUD TOOK A SMALL CONCILIATORY STEP TOWARD REDUCING TENSIONS BY SECRETLY AGREEING TO END PERSONAL ATTACKS ON EACH OTHER. ON THE AFGHAN SIDE, THESE HAD VERGED ON INCITEMENT OVER RADIO AFGHANISTAN TO ASSASSINATE BHUTTO.

8. RECENT IRRITANTS: ALTHOUGH THE AGREEMENT ON PERSONAL ATTACKS SEEMS TO BE HOLDING, CHARGES AND COUNTERCHARGES

CONTINUE.

(A)--IN FEBRUARY, PAKISTAN ACCUSED THE AFGHANS, AS WELL AS THE OPPOSITION NATIONAL AWAMI PARTY (NAP) IN PAKISTAN, WHICH KABUL HAS SUPPORTED, WITH COMPLICITY IN THE ASSASSINATION OF A PAKISTANI PROVINCIAL MINISTER.

(B)--THERE HAVE BEEN PERIODIC REPORTS THAT BOTH SIDES ARE TRAINING GUERRILLA INFILTRATORS. LAST SPRING, THE AFGHAN DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER TOLD EMBASSY KABUL THAT TWO GROUPS

OF PAKISTANI GUERRILLAS HAD BEEN CAUGHT. ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BORDER, THE PAKISTANI PRESS REPORTED DISCOVERIES OF ARMS CACHES IN THE FRONTIER AREA AND THE ARREST OF TWO AFGHANS.

(C)--IN EARLY JUNE, AFGHANISTAN MOVED TROOP UNITS TO THE BORDER AREA AFTER PAKISTANI SECURITY FORCES HAD CLASHED WITH TRIBESMEN RESISTING ROADBUILDING OPERATIONS.

(D)--IN LATE JULY, THE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT CHARGED THAT THE PAKISTANIS HAD BEEN INVOLVED IN SEVERAL INSURGENT INCIDENTS IN AFGHANISTAN. THE AFGHAN REGIME CONSIDERS THESE VIOLENT OUTBREAKS THE MOST SERIOUS TEST OF ITS AUTHORITY TO DATE. PAKISTAN DENIED THE ALLEGATIONS, BUT DAOUD TOLD EMBASSY KABUL A FEW DAYS LATER THAT HE HAD "FIRM EVIDENCE" THAT PAKISTAN HAD TRAINED AND SUPPLIED THE INSURGENTS. HE WARNED THAT FURTHER SUCH ACTIONS WOULD BRING "ADVERSE RESULTS" TO PAKISTAN, BUT THEN REITERATED THAT AFGHANISTAN DID NOT WANT PAKISTAN'S DISINTEGRATION.

9. THE SOVIET PERSPECTIVE: MOSCOW HAS NOT BEEN AVERSE TO FRICTION BETWEEN PAKISTAN AND AFGHANISTAN THAT  
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ENCOURAGES KABUL TO KEEP ITS SOVIET FENCES MENDED AND ISLAMABAD TO LOOK TO MOSCOW FOR MATERIAL AND MORAL ASSISTANCE. AT THE SAME TIME, THE SOVIETS HAVE LITTLE TO GAIN FROM HOSTILITIES BETWEEN THE TWO STATES AND HAVE CONSISTENTLY WORKED TO PREVENT THEM. APART FROM THE UNDESIRABILITY OF WAR NEAR THEIR OWN BORDERS (TRIBAL AFFILIATIONS CUT ACROSS THE USSR'S BORDERS AS WELL), THE SOVIETS MAY CALCULATE THAT AN AFGHAN-PAK CLASH

(A)--COULD INVOLVE IRAN, COMPLICATING THE USSR'S RELATIONS THERE;

(B)--WOULD OFFER THE CHINESE AN INCENTIVE FOR INTERVENTION, PERHAPS IN THE FORM OF A DIVERSION ON THE KASHMIR FRONTIER, WHICH IN TURN COULD BRING THE INDIANS INTO

THE STRUGGLE;

(C)--IF STARTED BY THE AFGHANS, WOULD INEVITABLY BE INTERPRETED ELSEWHERE AS EVIDENCE OF BACKSTAGE SOVIET TROUBLE-MAKING THAT WOULD BELIE THE SOVIET COMMITMENT TO DETENTE.

10. PRESENT IMPERATIVES: THE SOVIETS WOULD HAVE AT LEAST THREE DISTINCT BUT OVERLAPPING MOTIVES FOR INTERJECTING THEMSELVES INTO THE PAK-AFGHAN RELATIONSHIP:

11. FIRST AND MOST IMMEDIATE IS THE POLITICAL SCENE IN

KABUL. THE SOVIETS ARE CONCERNED ABOUT REPORTS OF "RIGHTIST" THREATS TO DAOUD AND WOULD NOT WELCOME A NEW REGIME TO THE RIGHT OF HIS. THAT CONCERN MAY HAVE PROMPTED THEM TO JOLT THE PAKISTANIS AND GIVE THEM SECOND THOUGHTS ABOUT INVOLVEMENT IN AFGHAN POLITICS.

12. WE HAVE NO READING OF WHAT ROLE THE PAKISTANI AMBASSADOR OR HIS STAFF MAY HAVE BEEN PLAYING IN AFGHAN POLITICS, BUT WE WOULD ASSUME THAT THE SOVIETS SUSPECT THEM OF INTRIGUE.

13. THE SOVIET "MESSENGER" IN KABUL IS A VETERAN OF MANY YEARS IN AFGHANISTAN AND CERTAINLY IS WELL-ATTUNED TO THE LOCAL SCENE; MOSCOW TAKES ITS RELATIONS WITH  
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AFGHANISTAN SERIOUSLY AND WOULD NOT VERY LONG RETAIN AN INCOMPETENT AT THAT POST. THIS DOES NOT PRECLUDE INEPTITUDE IN EXECUTING OFFICIAL INSTRUCTIONS, BUT IT DOES SUGGEST THAT HE COULD ANTICIPATE THE LIKELY PAKISTANI REACTION AND THAT HE WAS ACTING ON INSTRUCTIONS.

14. A SECOND SOVIET CONCERN IS PROMOTION OF BREZHNEV'S ASIAN COLLECTIVE SECURITY PROGRAM, ON WHICH THE SOVIET DIPLOMAT LEFT NO DOUBT. BY STRONGLY SUPPORTING THE AFGHANS IN THE PUSHTUN DISPUTE, MOSCOW PUTS ISLAMABAD ON NOTICE THAT IT MAY HAVE TO CONTEND WITH MORE THAN A MILITARILY WEAK KABUL WHERE AFGHAN ISSUES ARE CONCERNED.

15. BUT THE FORM OF THE SOVIET INTERJECTION SEEMS DESIGNED LARGELY TO CREATE AN EXCUSE FOR DISCUSSING REGIONAL ISSUES ON A BROADER SCALE. THE SOVIETS MAY HOPE THAT, BY RAISING THE LEVEL OF PAKISTANI CONCERN, THEY CAN FOSTER RECEPTIVITY IN ISLAMABAD TO REGIONAL SECURITY NEGOTIATIONS, WHICH WOULD SUBSUME THIS SPECIFIC BILATERAL ISSUE WITHIN A MULTILATERAL FRAMEWORK, JUST AS THE GERMAN-POLISH BORDER COULD BE NEGOTIATED SEPARATELY BUT UNDER THE UMBRELLA OF PREPARATIONS FOR THE CSCE.

16. THIRD, BHUTTO'S INCLINATION TO DISPENSE WITH CENTO FIGURES IN MOSCOW'S CALCULATIONS; THE SOVIETS ARE UNLIKELY TO DO ANYTHING TO DISCOURAGE A MOVE THAT THEY DEVOUTLY DESIRE. EVEN IF THE KABUL CONVERSATION ACTUALLY WERE A DEMARCHE, IT WOULD BE LOGICAL FOR THE SOVIETS TO EXPECT O UTILIZE THE RESULTANT EXCHANGE TO OFFER ASSURANCES ND SERVICES TO FACILITATE THE SEVERANCE OF CENTO TIES-- AND TO PROMOTE REGIONAL SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS AS A SUBSTITUTE.

17. THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN: ARGUING AGAINST A SOVIET "THREAT" TO PAKISTAN ARE THE PARALLELS BETWEEN THE SOVIET

ARGUMENTS IN THE AFGHAN CASE AND THE CHARGES THAT PEKING LEVIED AGAINST SOVIET POLICY IN EUROPE IN CONNECTION WITH THE CSCE. PUBLICATION OF THE SOVIET ARGUMENTS, AS THE PAKISTANIS REPORT THEM, MIGHT BE EMBARRASSING TO THE USSR.

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(A)--GIVEN ITS POSITION ON THE GERMAN QUESTION, MOSCOW WOULD HARDLY WISH TO GO ON PUBLIC RECORD DENOUNCING BORDERS BECAUSE THEY "DIVIDE A PEOPLE."

(B)--NOR COULD IT DENOUNCE BORDERS BECAUSE THEY DATED FROM A "COLONIAL" ERA WITHOUT COMPROMISING ITS STANCE VIS-A-VIS CHINA ON THE CZARIST BORDER TREATIES.

18. UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, IT APPEARS THAT THE SOVIET DIPLOMAT MAY HAVE FELT FREE TO EMBELLISH HIS OFFICIAL GUIDELINES FROM MOSCOW WITH SOME LOCAL COLOR, IN WHICH HE IS EVIDENTLY WELL-STEPPED, AND THAT HIS PRESENTATION WAS NOT INTENDED AS AN ULTIMATUM TO PAKISTAN. RATHER, HE WAS CHARGED WITH WARNING THE PAKISTANIS AGAINST DABBLING IN AFGHAN POLITICS AND WITH SETTING THE STAGE FOR A SOVIET DIALOGUE WITH BHUTTO ON BROADER ISSUES. INGERSOLL

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